



Marred

Sue Coletta

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When a serial killer breaks into the home of bestselling author, Sage Quintano, she barely escapes with her life. Her husband, Niko, a homicide detective, insists they move to rural New Hampshire, where he accepts a position as Grafton County Sheriff.

Sage buries secrets from that night—secrets she swears to take to her deathbed.

Three years of anguish and painful memories pass, and a grisly murder case lands on Niko's desk. A strange caller torments Sage—she can't outrun the past.

When Sage's twin sister suddenly goes missing, Sage searches Niko's case files and discovers similarities to the Boston killer. A sadistic psychopath is preying on innocent women, marring their bodies in unspeakable ways. And now, he has her sister.

Cryptic clues. Hidden messages. Is the killer hinting at his identity? Or is he trying to lure Sage into a deadly trap to end his reign of terror with a matching set of corpses?

Marred Details

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From Reader Review Marred for online ebook

Sheila Good says

Sage Quintano is a crime writer and married to a homicide detective, Niko. Both are bearing the scars of a brutal attack perpetrated on Sage by a serial killer. After moving to a smaller town to start over, they find themselves in the grips of terror once again. The characters are well developed and pull you into their lives from page one.

I found the changing POV from first to third a bit jarring at times, but not enough that it pulled me from the suspense of the story.

If you like crime thrillers, you'll like *Marred* by Sue Coletta.

Paul Anderson says

“If I was gonna kill someone, I’d probably read everything I could find on forensics,” says Ben, Sheriff Niko Quintano’s deputy, and that is so very true, not only about psychopathic serial killers but about crime writers worth their salt.

Crime writers need to read everything they can find about forensics, and it’s evident Sue Coletta has. *Marred* is the first published novel by Sue Coletta, a writer to watch. Sue Coletta includes lessons in forensics in every novel. She also includes keen insights on the failure of human communication gleaned from closely observing human interactions.

Sage Quintano, Niko’s wife and chief protagonist, is not only a best-selling crime writer but Sage is also a crime victim. Sage was brutally raped and nearly killed when Niko and Sage lived in Boston. Niko had arrived home in time to save Sage’s life but not the life of their unborn child. Even after moving from Boston to New Hampshire, Sage carries the scars of the killer’s intrusion on her body and in her mind. Niko thought taking a job as sheriff in a rural area of another state would keep Sage safe and help her to heal. But it seems the killer has followed Sage and Niko and now holds Sage’s twin sister hostage.

Sage’s fatal flaw is the unrelenting shame she feels from allowing herself to be raped. To save her own life—and the life of the fetus growing within her—she complied with the rapist’s demands. She should have fought. She should have screamed. But she didn’t. Sage’s shame prevents her from telling Niko the truth and keeps her from having a sexual assault examination performed that might have identified the killer through DNA; destroys the relationship she once had with her twin sister, Chloe; nearly ruins her marriage; and causes her to drive away her literary agent at a time she needs Jess’ help most. Shame and fear make Sage vulnerable. Vulnerable people tend to compound mistakes.

Niko’s fatal flaw is his failure to protect his wife. He has other shortcomings, too, and his failure to communicate—as does Sage’s failure to communicate—only compounds the situation. Niko doesn’t listen to others the way a good cop should. He seems insensitive to the feelings of others. He refuses to understand the needs of others and thinks only of himself. He needs to change if he wants to save his wife, save his job, and keep his marriage. But can he?

When they were first married, Niko and Sage made a deal. Only one of them would come unglued at the same time. Of course, that didn't apply when both were under attack and neither could think straight. Niko and Sage both come unglued and, if the serial killer doesn't kill them first, stress will.

Frankie Capanelli is Niko's partner. By right of seniority, Frankie should be chief deputy and Niko's choice to succeed him as sheriff. But Frankie is a bit too informal and unconventional in both her dress and demeanor for Niko's tastes, and Niko decides to groom Ben to become the next sheriff instead. Ben is the perfect candidate from a male chauvinistic perspective: he wears the uniform correctly, has former military experience, follows orders, and is polite and respectful. But is Ben really what he seems?

Marred is a roller-coaster thrill ride that alternates points of view between Sages' first person and Niko and Frankie's third person. Human beings make mistakes, and sometimes they hurt the people they love most. Sage, Niko, Frankie, and Chloe feel hurt, so they hurt others in return.

Marred leaves open the possibility of a sequel. I can't wait to read what happens next.

Petra says

Marred is a nail-biting serial killer thriller that, once started, was hard to put down.

You immediately feel drawn to the protagonist, Sage Quintano, who writes books about crime for a living and has experienced a horrendous crime herself. A vicious assault has left her struggling with every day life. Her marriage to Nico, a homicide detective, is suffering as a result of the experience and because of secrets she has been keeping from him. Moving to a rural area in order to heal and rebuild their lives, Nico takes on the position of sheriff and becomes involved in the search for a serial killer who leaves his female victims' bodies marred and displayed in a gruesome manner.

Then Sage's twin sister disappears, and everything suggests that Sage's assailant has followed her from Boston to New Hampshire to finish what he started years ago.

Told from Sage's first person point of view and alternating with chapters in the third person from Nico's and Frankie's (the deputy sheriff's) viewpoints, Marred was an intense and suspenseful thriller. The vivid descriptions of the settings and the information on the forensics were fascinating. Incredibly, Marred is Sue Coletta's debut novel. This author knows her stuff and has a very engaging style of writing and creating dialogue. I enjoyed the different points of view and particularly liked Frankie, Nico's deputy, whose viewpoint introduced a slightly lighter side to an otherwise very dark and scary story. I enjoy thrillers that manage to surprise me and Sue Coletta has definitely managed that with the unpredictable turns and developments that I did not see coming. The ending left potential for a sequel, and I will certainly seek out future publications by this author.

I was given a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

Cathy Ryan says

Three years ago Sage and Niko Quintano's lives were changed irrevocably after a horrific and brutal attack on Sage by a serial killer who also injured Niko. They left Boston where Niko was a homicide detective and relocated to a small New Hampshire town. Niko is now the Sheriff of Grafton County and he and Sage live

under the radar, their location a closely guarded secret. Or so they believe.

Niko and Sage are both still suffering emotionally as well as physically from the trauma. Sage is keeping her deepest feelings buried, finding it impossible to talk about certain details of the attack. She feels a victim's unjustified shame for not fighting her attacker, trying to save her unborn baby. Niko also fails to disclose his feelings and as a result Sage and Niko's marriage is not what it once was, leaving Sage feeling vulnerable and easily hurt. When Niko and his deputy, Frankie Capanelli, land a homicide case with haunting similarities to the Boston serial killer coupled with Sage's sister going missing, it seems Sage's past is returning to torment her, and once again she is in mortal danger.

There's no doubting the amount of research that's gone into this story. The vivid, disturbing and grisly descriptions of crime scenes and the forensic details are chillingly detailed. A well structured, dark and suspenseful plot, which makes it easy to get caught up in the narrative and be drawn to Sage. She's been through some of the worst things that could happen to a woman and now there's no end in sight.

I enjoyed Frankie's unconventionality and personality, a gruff exterior with a soft(ish) centre which she likes to keep well hidden. The writing and plot kept a good pace with unexpected twists, the main characters well drawn. The story is told in the first person from Sage's perspective with the rest in the third person.

Personally I found some of the narrative/dialogue a little choppy, the flow could have been smoother in places, but that said, *Marred* is a really good debut.

Chantelle Atkins says

A classy crime thriller which keeps you guessing until the end. Very well written, and incredibly well researched. This is the story of Sage, who suffered a brutal ordeal at the hands of the killer her detective husband was trying to catch. In a further gut wrenching twist, she also lost their unborn child in the attack. Some years later, the couple have moved away to put the past behind them, but Sage soon finds it is impossible to do so. Firstly because the same killer seems to be back, kidnapping, torturing and murdering young women close by, and secondly, because she never really told her husband the truth about the attack on her. The plot is handled skillfully, weaving between Sage's perspective (she is also a crime writer, so has her own methods in trying to find the truth) and Niko her husband's, as well as his deputy Frankie. I really liked Frankie's character the best. A tough, and slightly unprofessional cop, she is also hiding a brutal secret. I read this in two days and would highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys crime thrillers.

Eliza Cross says

There are two reasons why you should be prepared for sleepless nights when you read *Marred* by Sue Coletta. Reason #1, it's a page-turner and you'll be staying up late to see what happens next. And #2, if you're like me, you'll be thinking about Coletta's chilling story for a long, long time -- especially if your phone rings unexpectedly.

Early in the book I became completely invested in the protagonist Sage Quintano and her detective husband Niko's quest. Coletta's carefully researched writing style and whip-smart dialogue brings the reader inside a world of unthinkably gruesome murders, crime scene forensics, and criminal psychology as Sage and Niko

try to stop a brutal, twisted killer. The intrigue builds through many plot twists and turns, and Coletta's vivid, heart-stopping descriptions are so jarringly real that there are several scenes I'll never forget. I couldn't put down *Marred* until I reached the last page, and it was such a satisfying read that I don't even mind the hours of lost sleep. I can't wait to read more by this author!

Pat says

Yikes, a creepy/scary page-turner, a bit gruesome.

Beaux Cooper says

I don't want to say this book is nightmare fuel, but this isn't the kind of book you want to read before going to bed. Especially as a woman. Even more so as a single woman living alone in a dark apartment with no one to hear you scream.

ahem

Excuse me.

It's the kind of book you read with all the lights on and the doors locked. It's the kind of book you have a light hearted chaser for; like watching a Disney movie after watching Friday the 13th. And why, after storming through the first third of it in my initial reading that I went to bed with a harmless western in my hands instead of my Kindle.

Sue Coletta isn't going to spare you the gory details or an honest look behind the crime scene tape. She's a well versed author in all things crime who indelicately dumps you into the middle of a life which has been disrupted, disturbed, and *marred* by the evil acts of a solitary man. When there is a serial killer on the loose targeting young women and seemingly no connection between them it's hard for a community to sleep at night. But when your twin sister suddenly goes missing and you answer the phone to an unfamiliar, sinister voice - that's when your life comes to a screeching halt. We are there when our heroine, Sage Quintano, comes to terms with her past, when she bursts out against those she loves, and when she decides to take back control.

You won't have to wait for the action to start in this novel, so buckle up and prepare yourself for a dark ride through a dark tunnel with only Coletta to guide you out!

C.S. Boyack says

This book is a chilling, thrill a minute, read. Others have addressed the plot and theme, so I'm going to mention some of the background information. The supporting characters are well fleshed out, and I found myself looking forward to one deputy in particular. Coletta's settings are wonderfully described without dedicating a ton of space. This book reads well, and delivers everything it promises and more. I will seek out this author in the future.

Garry Rodgers says

Lock your door. Turn up your lights. And be prepared to thoroughly engross in one of the best reading rides you'll ever have. Sue Coletta's brilliantly told crime thriller, *Marred*, is the emotional, gut-tearing story of Sage Quintano's physical and psychological survival—first from a vicious sexual assault, then from the taunting stalk by a deranged serial killer who's abducted Sage's twin sister, Chloe.

Marred suspends you into a terrifying world through an incredibly well-structured plot. The characters are superbly developed. The dialogue is fast, sharp, and thoroughly convincing. The twists, turns, and hidden clues keep you immersed in pure story right from the heartbreakening prologue to an end that you'll never see coming.

But what impressed me most—and this is coming from a person who spent a lifetime as a real-life homicide detective and forensic coroner—is the accuracy of detail in the crime scenes and how well the forensic evidence is woven-in.

If there were a six-star rating, I'd give it to *Marred*. And I'm predicting that Sue Coletta is going to be a household name in the crime thriller genre. She's just that good a writer!

~ Garry Rodgers, Retired homicide detective, forensic coroner, and bestselling author.

Boundless Book Reviews says

Sage Quintano has been through hell. She is attacked by a crazed killer and now years later shes being haunted again. Niko, her husband, is a detective. He convinces her to leave Boston and move to a rural small town to start fresh, but when a killer comes to his town things begin to heat up again. Sage is now being threatened again by this man who has upped the game and took her twin sister. Now Sage has to put herself in danger to save her.

This book is a bit of a wild ride. It starts off fast and just keeps going till the very end. Its a psychological thriller filled with mysterious twists and turns on a every page. The characters are easy to fall for, especially Sage. With her dark past and her rocky present, she is a character easy to feel sorry for and get attached to. This book was definitely a late night page turner. I hated putting it down because I just wanted, NEEDED, to know what was next.

This book had me hooked from page one. It was well written and It was filled with mystery, action, and crime. I have never read anything from this author, but I look forward to reading more in the future. Based on this book alone, I am sure I will enjoy them all.

<http://www.boundlessbookreviews.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/BBReviews>

Olga Miret says

For police procedural lovers looking for characters they can relate to. And some great secondary players. I'm

reviewing this book as part of Rosie's Book Review Team and was provided with a copy of the book that I freely chose to review.

I read and reviewed Sue Coletta's *Wings of Mayhem*, book one in The Mayhem Series (check the review [here](#)), and was impressed and intrigued. Now, on the occasion of the launch of the second book in the Grafton County Series, *Cleaved* (yes, I'm reading and reviewing that too, try and stop me!) I managed to catch up with the author's first book in that series, that chronicles the lives of Sage and Niko Quintano, a couple who now live in Grafton County, New Hampshire, where they took refuge after something horrific happened to Sage. Niko is the new sheriff and Sage is a successful author of crime novels, although, unfortunately, she ends up playing the part of the victim in real life more than once.

Sage and Niko are trying to recover from their personal tragedy, as Sage lost a baby she was carrying when she was assaulted but they are both keeping things from each other, in an attempt at protecting the other. During the book, they'll realise they are stronger together and the best way to beat evil is to be honest with each other and to share the truth, however hard it might be to hear.

The novel has strong elements of the police procedural genre. Niko is an accomplished detective, although sometimes hindered by his personal feelings and his inability to see and accept the unacceptable, and as there are not as many crime fighting means in a small town, he gets to share his expertise (his training one of the deputies gives the reader the perfect opportunity to eavesdrop and learn, although it might be a bit too much detail for those with no appetite for the grosser things in the art of detecting) on issues such as blood spatter and how to process a crime scene. Frankie, his fiery and fashion conscious deputy, is a fabulous character who takes no prisoners and tolerates no fools. Sadly, that means she has little opportunity for career advancement, as tact is not her strong suit, but through the novel, we get to understand her better, see her softer side, and she's great at one-liners and gritty and witty repartees. Although Niko might complain about Frankie's evident disdain for authority, he enjoys the banter and their relationship is one of the fun and lighter elements in the novel. The crimes are gruesome, bizarre and puzzling, as it appears the killer is trying to send a message but nobody knows what it is or who the intended recipient might be. There are red herrings and confusion, as it becomes clear that these crimes relate to what happened to Sage years back, in Boston, but we don't know how or why. Lies and withholding of information don't help and Sage does a fair deal of amateur investigating too.

Apart from the police procedural aspect, there are also other elements that give the novel a distinct flavour. The strong relationship between the couple and their shared (at least in part) trauma plays a big part in the action and also in the reactions and behaviours of the characters, that at times might stretch reader's suspension of disbelief but would fit in with somebody trying to survive to a horrible ordeal. This is not the typical novel about the lone detective, who lives only for his work and solving cases but is totally unable to have a meaningful relationship. Thanks to Sage's memories we share some of the couple's high and low points. Pet names, real pets and home life (including thoughts about the laundry) ground the characters and their relationship making them more relatable and real, rather than just case-solving automatons. Sage's otherworldly encounters (she consults a spiritual guide and has a very special experience during the investigation, but I won't spoil the story) are also outside the norm for a book otherwise very realistic and detailed.

The story is told from the points of view of several characters. Sage's point of view is narrated in the first person and that makes the reader identify with her more closely. She is also a writer through and through and observes everybody around her, everything that happens and analyses her own thoughts and feelings in detail. Niko and Frankie are also given a narrative, although theirs is in the third person but still manages to make us see their different perspectives, helps us understand their behaviours and thought processes, and provides more information the readers can try and use to put together the jigsaw puzzle.

The book has a great sense of rhythm, and alternates very tense and dark scenes with moments of light relief (Frankie and the other deputies are always at hand with some strenuous comment or mishap, Sage and Niko also have their humorous moments and the novel is tongue-in-cheek about possible comparisons, including comments about Castle) and is particularly effective at dropping the readers right into the action and making

them share the experiences and emotions of the characters. The ending manages to be satisfactorily upbeat while also introducing a final disquieting note.

A recommended reading for those who love detailed police procedural novels (and TV series like CSI, Criminal Minds and yes, Castle), with characters who carry a heavy baggage, in a backwoods/small-town setting and with less down-to-earth elements thrown in too. A strong stomach is a necessary requirement. I'd also recommend it to writers keen on the genre as there's much to be learned from the author.

Carol says

Stunning emotional and riveting read!!!

This is a power packed psychological thriller filled with suspense, thrills and chills around every corner. There are twists and turns that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The tension was very thick and well sustained.

Sage Quintano is a crime writer. Niko Quintano is a homicide detective married to Sage.

Three years ago, Sage was held by a serial killer. Niko was shot in the shoulder when he came to rescue her. Sage miscarried and has never been able to overcome the demons that haunt her.

And now the serial killer is back holding Sage's sister hostage. Sage must meet his demands or lose her sister.

The author weaves the past and present together effortlessly. The author gets inside the heads of her characters and presents them to the readers so that the inner workings of all her characters are understood.

Marred is a terrifying and chilling to the bone thriller you will want to be sure to read.

I volunteered to read this eBook. Thanks to the author via the Facebook Mystery Thriller Week event. My opinion is my own.

Murder in Common says

Chosen as one of my recommended summer reads: MurderinCommon.com

<http://wp.me/p3XU1u-4qW>

Nicholas Rossis says

Nail-biting fun, from cover to cover. Coletta starts with a bang and doesn't let go of the reader until the very last, chilling sentence.

Mind you, it does get dark. In Coletta's world, terrible things do happen to nice people.

Still, if you enjoy a well-written, well-researched thriller, then this is the perfect book for you.
